AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

Please replace all nine pages of the paper copy of the Sequence Listing, submitted with Applicants' Dec. 21, 2004 Preliminary Amendment and listing 18 sequences, with the enclosed paper copy of the Sequence Listing, listing 20 sequences, by entering substitute sheets 1 to 9, enclosed herewith.

[See enclosed Sequence Listing substitute sheets 1 to 9.]

Please replace the computer readable form of the Sequence Listing, submitted on CD with Applicants' Dec. 21, 2004 Preliminary Amendment and listing 18 sequences, with the enclosed, substitute computer readable form on CD, listing 20 sequences.

[See enclosed CD containing the substitute computer readable form of the Sequence Listing.]

Please replace the paragraph at page 20, lines 30-32, with the following paragraph, presented in amendment format.

Figures 2A to 2D provide the nucleotide sequence for the ORF2 (SEQ ID NO:4) of Chinese HEV strain (DDBJ Accession No. D11092) and the E2 fragment (SEQ ID NO:1, which sequence is shown continuing with nt1823-1990 of SEQ ID NO:4) derived therefrom; the single base pair deletion is indicated by a box;

Please replace the paragraph at page 20, lines 34-35, with the following paragraph, presented in amendment format.

Figure 3 provides the nucleotide sequence for the ORF3 (SEQ ID NO:5) of Chinese HEV strain (DDBJ Accession No. D11092) and the E3 fragment (SEQ ID NO:6) derived therefrom;

Please replace the paragraph at page 21, line 1, with the following paragraph, presented in amendment format.

Figure 4 provides the amino acid sequence of the pE2 peptide (SEQ ID NO:2) encoded by E2;

Please replace the paragraph at page 21, line 3, with the following paragraph, presented in amendment format.

Figure 5 provides the amino acid sequence of the pE3 protein (SEQ ID NO:7) encoded by E3;

Please replace the paragraph at page 26, lines 26-27, with the following paragraph, presented in amendment format.

SEQ ID NO: 3 is the nucleic acid sequence of the downstream primer, ~~ORF2Rb~~ ORF2Rc ~~(refer to Table 9)~~.

Please replace the paragraph at page 50, lines 16-22, with the following paragraph, presented in amendment format.

The original cDNA sequence, which spanned positions 6326 to 7136 with a single base pair deletion at position 6957, was cloned from the ORF2 region using the primer pair ORF2F/ORF2Ra. However, the novel E2 cDNA sequence (i.e. SEQ ID NO: 1) can be cloned from the same region using the same upstream primer, ORF2F, and the new downstream primer, ~~ORF2Rb, located to nucleotide numbers 6932 to 6956~~ORF2Rc. The new cloned sequence encodes the identical pE2 peptide (i.e. SEQ ID NO: 2), except that the sequence located downstream of the new stop codon has been removed.

Please replace the table (Table 9) at page 51, lines 4-15, with the following table, presented in amendment format except that the underlining of 5'-terminal nucleotides in column 4 of rows 3 (ORF2F), 4 (ORF2Ra), 7 (ORF3F), and 8 (ORF3R) is original and is not in amendment format.

Primer*	Purpose	Position	Sequence	Enzyme Site
3R	RT	5508-5529	5'-CGGGGAGTCAACATCAGGCACT-3' (SEQ ID NO:8)	
E5R	RT	7117-7140	5'-AAGCAAATAAACTATAACTCCCGA-3' (SEQ ID NO:9)	
ORF2F	Cloning	6326-6350	5'-GCT*GGATCC*CAGCTGTTCTACTCTCGTCCCGTCG-3' (SEQ ID NO:10)	BamHI
ORF2Ra	Cloning	7117-7136	5'-GGC*GAATTCC*AAATAAACTATAACTCCCGA-3' (SEQ ID NO:11)	EcoRI
ORF2Rb	Cloning	6932-6956	5'-GGC*GAATTC*GGGGGGCTAAAACAGCAACCGCGGA3'(SEQ ID NO:19)	EcoRI
ORF2Rc	Cloning	6943-6968	5'-GGCGAATCCCTAGCGCGGAGGGGGGGCTAAAACA3' (SEQ ID NO:3)	
ORF3F	Cloning	5364-5384	5'-CCG*GGATCC*GACCTCGTGTTCGCCAACCCG-3' (SEQ ID NO:12)	BamHI
ORF3R	Cloning	5457-5477	5'-CAG*GAATTCC*TTAGCGGCGCGGCCCCAGCTG-3' (SEQ ID NO:13)	EcoRI
A3R	RT-PCR	4566-4586	5'-GGCTCACCGGAGTGTTTCTTC-3' (SEQ ID NO:14)	
A5F	RT-PCR	4341-4362	5'-CTTTGATGACACCGTCTTCTCG-3' (SEQ ID NO:15)	
B3R	RT-PCR	4554-4575	5'-GTGTTTCTTCCAAAACCCTCGC-3' (SEQ ID NO:16)	
B5F	RT-PCR	4372-4392	5'-GCCGCAGCAAAGGCATCCATG-3' (SEQ ID NO:17)	

Please replace the paragraph at page 51, line 29, to page 52, line 8, with the following paragraph, presented in amendment format.

The PCR products were extracted with phenol-chloroform and then precipitated with ethanol. The products, E2 and E3, and the vector $pGEX_{20}$ were digested using BamHI and EcoRI (Boeringer Mannheim). The $pGEX_{20}$ vector was a gift from Dr. Cao Liang, Department of Microbiology, the University of Hong Kong. It was a derivative of a pGEX expression vector (Smith *et al.*, 1988) with the multiple cloning site 5'-CCGCGTGGATCCGAAATTCCTCGAGATCGATTAG-3' (SEQ ID NO:20) containing BamHI, EcoRI, XhoI and ClaI restriction cleavage recognition sequences. The digested fragments were separated on agarose gels, recovered by cutting the band out of the gel, electro-elution and then precipitated by ethanol. Afterwards, E2 and E3 were ligated to $pGEX_{20}$ using T4 ligase (Boeringer Mannheim). The recombinant plasmids $pGEX_{20}$-E2 and $pGEX_{20}$-E3 were transformed into E.Coli DH5α by electro-transformation with a gene pulser [BIO-RAD] and plated on LB agar plates (Sambrook *et al.*, 1989) with ampicillin (100 µg/mℓ). Twenty colonies of transformants were picked up for plasmid preparation. BamHI and EcoRI digestion was subsequently carried out and recombinants with the expected insert size were chosen (Figure 6). All plasmids used in this study were prepared using the QIAgen mini-plasmid kit [QIAgen, Hilden, Germany].